

## The Power of Reflection



*There are three principal means of acquiring knowledge... observation of nature, reflection, and experimentation. Observation collects facts; reflection combines them; experimentation verifies the result of that combination.*

*Denis Diderot*

We are all meant to discover the world around us and continuously learn from our mistakes, triumphs, experiments and observations. The way that we learn and improve is through reflection. Over the past several months, many have experienced drastic changes to their work, school, and entertainment. What can we learn from the many months spent during the pandemic?

Take some time to think about how you spent this past year. What are your takeaways? Is there an aspect that you would like to continue in the future? Although many found working from home a difficult experience, it may have taught you more about work/life balance. Since you didn't spend as much time fighting traffic, you may have taken your commute time and turned it into learning how to cook, spending time with family, or reading a book. However, you may have

chosen the opposite and spent more of your “commute” time working. Do you have any regrets about how you spent your time in quarantine?

Reflection helps us to become more self-aware and empowers us to be better humans. With deep and intentional reflection, we strive to improve and make better choices because we learn from our mistakes. When we take the time to reflect on our failures, we learn how to prevent them from happening again. So, when you think about the last several months, what would you like to change moving forward? You can reflect on your time before the pandemic. Is there an aspect of that part of your life that you do not want to repeat now that you have a chance to essentially start over?

Reflection also provides an opportunity to create great ideas. With some quiet time to think, you may discover a new way to approach work, school, or family life. It may be as simple as creating a new habit of meditating each morning for five minutes. This quiet time is just for you. It gives you the opportunity to gather your thoughts and focus your intentions.

With reflection, we not only gain better insight, we also begin to understand ourselves better. We realize why we make certain choices and why we have particular preferences. With a better understanding of who we are, we can gain more insights of ourselves to further learn about our strengths, weaknesses, fears, and we might even discover something unexpected.

Reflection also allows us to gain perspective. Rather than dwelling on a mistake, we can begin to understand that one mistake is not the end of the world. With all of the decisions we make each day, a few mistakes over a span of a week, month, or year really doesn't mean that much in the span of a lifetime. So rather than becoming frustrated or angry, reflection allows us to look ahead and make positive changes in the future.

Taking time for reflection can take many forms. You can choose to do it daily, weekly, or after each major event in your life. The key is to take the time to be intentional. Ask yourself the hard questions. If you take the time to reflect on the pandemic, ask yourself what you would have done differently. Once you come to some possible answers, determine how you can make some of those changes in the future.